

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections to and rejections of the application are requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith, which are believed to place the application into condition for allowance.

I. STATUS OF CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 20-23 are pending. By this paper claim 23 is amended. Support for the claims as presented herein can be found throughout the specification and from the claims as originally filed. No new matter is added. A certified copy of German patent application DE 199 05 224.7, to which priority is claimed in the present application, is submitted herewith.

II. OBJECTIONS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 23 was objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 (c) as being of improper dependent form, for allegedly failing to properly limit claim 20. In accordance with the Examiner's suggestion, claim 23 is hereby rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to claim 23 is respectfully requested.

III. DOUBLE PATENTING REJECTIONS

Claim 23 was rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 to 22 of U.S. Patent No. 6,612,836. A Terminal Disclaimer, disclaiming the terminal part of any patent granted on the instant application which would extend beyond the expiration date of the full statutory term of U.S. Patent No. 6,612,836, is being filed concurrently with the present Amendment.

Claims 20 to 22 were also rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 22 of U.S. Patent No. 6,403,751. A Terminal Disclaimer, disclaiming the terminal part of any patent granted on the instant application which would extend beyond the expiration date of the full statutory term of U.S. Patent No. 6,403,751, is being filed concurrently with the present Amendment.

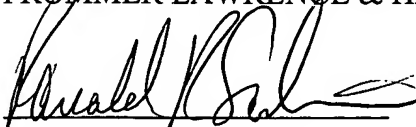
Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the claims under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the remarks and amendments herewith the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application and prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited. The undersigned looks forward to hearing favorably from the Examiner at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,
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